

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting

February 14, 2005

Members present: Mr. Staton, Mr. Martin, Mr. Daniel, Mr. Drew, Senator Fair, Mr. Hall, Mrs. Marlowe, Representative Neal, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Stowe, Superintendent Tenenbaum, Representative Walker, Mrs. Williams

I. Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Staton welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He announced the appointment of Senator Wes Hayes to the EOC as the designee of the Chairman, Senate Education Committee. He also introduced Neil Robinson, newly appointed as a business member by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Members introduced themselves to Mr. Robinson.

II. Approval of the Minutes of December 13, 2004 The minutes of the December 13, 2004 meetings were approved as distributed.

III. Report of the Task Force on Testing

Dr. Lynn Harrill reported on behalf of the Task Force on Testing organized by the State Department of Education (SDE) and the EOC. Dr. Harrill introduced the Task Force subcommittee chairpersons, Dr. Debbie Hamm, Dr. Judy Newman, and Dr. Jim Ray. He then introduced Ray Fleming, a citizen member of the Task Force.

Mr. Fleming addressed the EOC, outlining his interests in the improvement in South Carolina's schools and participation on the task force. He explained how he worked with teachers in four schools to ensure that their concerns were represented in the discussion and his endorsement of the recommendations.

Dr. Harrell discussed the work of the task force and explained each of the task force recommendations.

Members asked questions of Dr. Harrill and other Task Force representatives. Questions addressed (1) the recommendation to sample students within grade levels in science and social studies and if there would be sufficient information to address student needs; (2) the use of the term "computer-adaptive" and "MAP;" (3) the HSAP exemption; (4) the differentiated assessment model; and (5) the utility of formative assessments.

Superintendent Tenenbaum addressed the EOC and the leadership of the Task Force. She expressed her appreciation for the work and concurrence with the sentiments of the recommendations. She indicated that the SDE requires time to examine the recommendations to determine the time and resources needed for implementation. She indicated that some statutory changes would be required and that some aspects would require review by the US Department of Education. She indicated the SDE would provide a written response. Among those areas of particular importance she indicated the following:

- Agreement with the maintenance of the state developed or state adapted assessments
- Agreement with the implementation of formative assessments
- Agreement with the long-term shift to computerized testing

- Agreement to provide more information on the standards and assessments
- Information on SDE work to improve classroom assessments and agreement with the need to continue
- Agreement with the curriculum experts meeting annually.
- Agreement with the elimination of PACT-grades one and two
- Examination of the elimination of constructed response items

The EOC members discussed appropriate actions. Senator Fair moved that the report be forwarded to the General Assembly without comment. After discussion he withdrew his motion. Members discussed areas of legislative action, areas for further discussion, the degree to which teacher concerns were met, and the need for the SDE to develop implementation time lines and costs.

Mr. Walker asked that reference to a specific commercial test be removed from page three of the report and that the sentence following be deleted as well since it seemed to limit formative assessments to computer adaptive. There is not an intent to preclude criterion-referenced.

The EOC approved the report and asked that it be forwarded to the General Assembly with a notation that the SDE required time for review and comment and that the EOC would continue to study the assessment issues.

IV. Subcommittee Reports

A. Academic Standards and Assessments: Mr. Hall reported on behalf of the subcommittee. The subcommittee, and subsequently the EOC approved the following:

1. Approval of changes to the high school ratings to incorporate the following:

Recommendation 1, Part A. Do not change the current high school rating criteria in 2005-2006. Keep the LIFE Scholarship criterion at 20% and do not use the End of Course results as one of the criteria for rating high schools in 2005-2006. However, begin using End of Course test results for high school ratings in lieu of LIFE Scholarship eligibility criteria in 2006-2007. It is the intention of the Committee that the End of Course test results used for the high school ratings beginning in 2006-2007 should include the results from all students enrolled in the high school who take an End of Course test(s) during the school year on which the rating is based. In addition, the End of Course test results for students attending grade 9 for the first time (or grade 10 in a high school having a grades 10-12 organization) who took the End of Course test(s) in middle school (grades 7-8) or junior high school (grade 9) should be included in the calculation of the high school rating for the high school.

Recommendation 1, Part B. Report the End of Course test results on the high school and district report cards beginning in 2005-2006. End of Course test results should be reported as the percentage of students scoring 70 or above by subject or by across subjects and reported on the report cards, to be determined in consultation with the State Department of Education.

Recommendation 1, Part C. Revise the school district rating by adding End of Course test results as an additional criterion in 2005-2006. Simulations of the data will need to

be run to determine how the End of Course test results will be included in the district rating calculations.

Members asked that the high school graduation rate continue to be a source of study and for understanding why the percentage of schools rated Good or Excellent is so high in comparison to the graduation rate.

2. The EOC approved the Subcommittee recommendation to delay changes to the primary school rating, but to convene an advisory group to examine the performance of the current criteria and determine criteria that can discriminate more readily among schools.

B. EIA and Improvement Mechanisms: Mr. Daniel reported on behalf of the subcommittee. Mr. Daniel outlined the reports on the Teacher Specialist on Site Program, the Retraining Grant Program and a comparison of the EOC-recommended budget with the Governor's recommendations.

C. Parent and Community Involvement: Mr. Hall reported on behalf of the subcommittee. The subcommittee had heard from the parent and family literacy program coordinators and was provided detail on the joint planning process that the EOC had supported.

D. Public Awareness: Mr. Martin reported on behalf of the subcommittee. PAIRS is to be launched on February 15. Members are asked to identify a minimum of five programs in their area to be approached as affiliates.

E. Administration: Mr. Staton reported on behalf of the subcommittee. He drew members' attention to *Common Ground* and indicated that the concept paper has been presented to a number of individuals and groups. Plans for the event are continuing. He also drew members' attention to the draft Annual Report that is to be published on March 1.

V. Special Report: Teacher Working Conditions
Dr. Janice Poda, Deputy Superintendent, SDE and Ms. Ann Byrd, Executive Director, CERRA reported on the survey of teacher working conditions. The survey, administered in the fall, received responses from 15,000 teachers and elicited their opinions about working conditions and compared responses to performance. The three principal findings are the following:

- Teachers working conditions are significant predictors of student achievement and teacher retention
- Teachers are generally satisfied with their working conditions. . .although they are least satisfied with what they argue is most important to student learning
- Teachers, regardless of their background and experience, view working conditions similarly.

Dr. Poda and Ms. Byrd outlined tools that are available to administrators to enhance their understanding of the survey results and to improve teacher working conditions.

Adjournment: At 4:00 p.m. the EOC adjourned.